
DIGEST

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Willmott

HB No. 772

Abstract: Makes changes to the Health Professional Development Program. Eliminates nursing and other professionals from scholarship program. Creates a new board to administer scholarships awarded to promote primary care and dentistry in certain areas. Removes number of scholarships which must be granted by Dept. of Health and Hospitals (DHH) every year.

Present law provides for a Health Professional Development Program under DHH.

Present law defines certain terms including "health manpower shortage areas", "department", and "secretary".

Proposed law retains present law, but changes "health manpower shortage area" to "health professional shortage area" in order to be consistent with federal law.

Proposed law defines "reasonable education expenses" as non-tuition costs including fees, books, supplies, clinical travel, educational equipment, and materials, which do not exceed the school's estimated standard budget for educational expenses for the participant's degree program for the years of that participant's enrollment.

Proposed law retains present law, but narrows the program to increase the number of primary care physicians and dentists in rural or underserved urban areas.

Present law requires that students be enrolled in a doctoral program offered at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC), an approved registered nursing program at a college or university, or an approved licensed practical nursing program at any public institution.

Proposed law eliminates the scholarship program for registered and licensed practical nursing and for students enrolled in a doctoral program at LSUHSC. Retains a scholarship program for students enrolled in a medical or dentistry program at LSUHSC. Proposed law changes present law to allow students enrolled in a medical or dentistry program at a professional school in Louisiana to apply and receive a scholarship. Further requires students to come from a rural area or an underserved area and continuously participate in a rural primary care, general primary care, or dentistry track program within a Louisiana medical or dental school.

Present law requires students to pursue an approved course of study and maintain an acceptable level of academic standing leading to a degree in medicine or dentistry.

Proposed law retains present law.

Present law requires students to agree in writing to serve in a health manpower shortage area classified by the United States Public Health Service for one year for each year of receiving the scholarship.

Proposed law repeals present law and specifies that the amount of the scholarship is equal to the lowest base tuition of a public medical school in the state and other reasonable education expenses.

Present law provides that failure of the student to serve in a health professional shortage area after graduation for an agreed upon time results in a substantial penalty. Further provides that DHH determines the amount of the penalty.

Proposed law retains present law, but further provides that DHH may, through rulemaking, waive certain scholarship requirements "for hardship" or any other contractual obligation as deemed necessary to protect the state's investments and workforce policy goals.

Present law specifies that DHH, subject to the availability of funds, provide enough scholarships for ten registered nurses, ten licensed practical nurses, and ten physicians to specialize in family medicine, emergency medicine, pediatrics, medicine/pediatrics, or obstetrics/gynecology.

Proposed law eliminates the requirement to provide a certain number of scholarships in any given year.

Proposed law establishes a scholarship awards committee within DHH to review applications for scholarships and award them accordingly. Provides that the committee is comprised of the following persons or designee: the secretary of DHH, the chancellor of LSUHSC-New Orleans, the chancellor of LSUHSC-Shreveport, the dean of the Tulane School of Medicine, the dean of the LSU School of Dentistry, the speaker of the House, and the president of the Senate.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 40:1300.1, 1300.2(2) and (4), 1300.3(A), 1300.4(B) and (C), and 1300.5(A) and (B); Adds R.S. 40:1300.2(5) and 1300.5(C)-(H))